# REAL ESTATE

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# Energy-efficient dream home

## Absecon house showcases EPA 'Energy Star' pilot program

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Zenia Chalupa, left, program manager of Atlantic Electric, talks with homeowner Neil DiLorenzo, center, and builder John Irons in front of DiLorenzo's Absecon home, which is the first in the Atlantic Electric's Energy Star Homes Program.

**ABSECON** — Neil DiLorenzo once had a $500 electric bill.

But he may have found his dream home, one that's supposed to save him money on energy costs.

DiLorenzo and his wife, Gina, are moving into a two-story European provincial home on New York Avenue that's the first of Atlantic Energy's new energy-efficiency program.

As an "Energy Star" home, the 3,100-square-foot structure is sealed so tight that DiLorenzo may never feel a draft again.

The air is filtered. And the windows are tinted to prevent heat from coming in.

DiLorenzo, who could save as much as 30 percent on his electric bills, was looking for this kind of residence for 10 years.

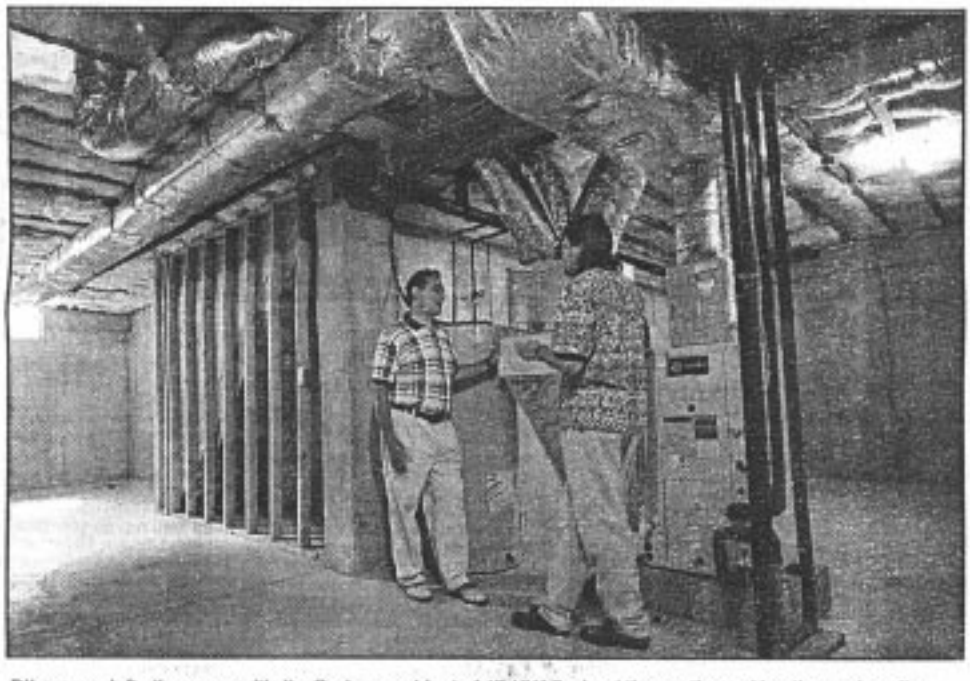
"We love the home and the builder did a nice job with it," said DiLorenzo, an assistant principal in Wildwood.

With the builder, Irons Custom Homes of Ventnor, by his side, DiLorenzo joined Atlantic Electric representatives Thursday in cutting a ribbon on the home's steps, and displaying the brick structure to the media.

The Environmental Protection Agency developed the Energy Star Homes Program as a way to promote the advantages of building energy-efficient homes.

Such homes will have a higher resale value because they've been upgraded, said Mike Flannery, marketing manager for MaGrann Associates of Mount Laurel, the project's energy consultant.

He joined the ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday morning.



DiLorenzo, left, discusses with Jim Burke, president of JB-HVAC, about the geothermal heating and cooling system unit in the basement of DiLorenzo's energy-efficient home.

These upgrades could increase the cost of building a home by at least 2 or 3 percent, said John Irons, owner of Irons Custom Homes.

Irons and DiLorenzo declined to reveal the cost of the home construction.

Those improvements include heat pumps, high-efficiency central air conditioners and furnaces, low-emission windows and tightly sealed ducts, among other things.

Some of these upgrades are not easily seen in the house, which has three bedrooms and another that's unfinished. It also has 2½ bathrooms and a 2½-car garage.

DiLorenzo is getting a certificate from the EPA certifying the house as an Energy Star structure.

### Tour shows energy-saving benefits

Taking the media on a tour of the house, Irons pointed to the windows as perhaps the home's most visible symbol of energy efficiency. A film-like material tints the glass and prevents heat from coming in.

The idea is, the inside of the house will feel cooler in the summer time when the air conditioners are running.

"Not only is it energy efficient, but it prevents the carpets and furniture from fading," Irons said.

The ducts are tightly sealed with foam and caulk to prevent drafts. Some areas are even fiberglass-reinforced to prevent leaks.

These features also should help the DiLorenzos cope with allergies.

"The air is much cleaner because we also have an air filtration system," DiLorenzo said.

The living area has a high ceiling, but it's not cathedral-shaped. DiLorenzo said the ceiling is flat, which better insulates the room.

A heating unit in the basement draws heat from water underground, then recycles the water back to the earth. No oil or gas is used.

Otherwise, the obvious signs of energy efficiency may not appear until DiLorenzo gets his bill.

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